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the British Association are as follows:

> I think that our "British Association" is in an unhealthy condition owing to the attempt made by it—not deliberately, but by constitutional looseness of purpose—to combine the features of a friendly picnic and smoking debate with the work of a national conference dealing (under the disadvantage of public ignorance and journalistic inaccuracy) with great questions of national importance. A choice must be made between "picnic" and "conference." I should prefer the picnic. —E. Ray Lankester.
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> Unless the British Association becomes democratic and acts as a real bond of union between scientific men and the thinking public, rather than as a periodic platform for personages, it does not seem to fulfil any function worth continuing. The public application of science is a totally different thing from applied science. This scientific synthesis and the direction of the unique mental attitude, induced only by the actual discovery of new knowledge, to the conduct of public affairs are the real and peculiar functions of the association if it is to regain its national position. Curved space, isotopes, and the economics of life on the floor of the ocean are topics of great interest to hundreds of the public. The standards of truth which science has set up, and the elevation of its pursuit above sophistry, chicanery, and the monotonous motives of self-interest, inspire the imagination of hundreds of thousands. The British Association seems to be attacked by senile paralysis just as a belief in science and in the power of its methods is arising in the world phœnix-like from the ashes of its old self.—Frederick Soddy.
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> Your criticism of the British Association, that it fails to touch our national life, is most opportune; but whereas you imply merely that it is decadent, to me it seems to be practically defunct. An active worker on its behalf in the past, I have little hope of its resuscitation and doubt if it can ever again fulfil the desires of its early promoters, who undoubtedly held its primary function to be that of advancing public appreciation of scientific discovery. I have always deplored our failure to appeal to the public. Seemingly, the spirit of sacrifice is gone out of science; strange to say, the herd instinct is altogether wanting in our society, so uncontrolled is our individuality. The assumed author of "The Beggar's Opera," after remarking of his characters, "There's not an honourable man among them, nor an honest woman," proceeds to say, "but they are all human." So are the present exploiters of the British Association, though were it not human to be selfish some might even dub them inhuman on account of the narrowness of their outlook and their disregard of public needs.—Henry E. Armstrong.

These are the more extreme criticisms. Letters and articles in defense of the association have also appeared and the honorary secretaries, Professors J. L. Myers and H. H. Turner have prepared a statement answering criticisms and outlining plans for the future work of the association.

THE ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH UNDER THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

Our federal government has more scientific men in its bureaus and devotes larger sums to scientific work than any other nation. An immense amount of useful work is accomplished, but individual initiative is likely to be submerged by routine. It may, therefore, be worth while to note how the British Government has met the situation during and since the war period.

The last report of the Committee of the Privy Council for Scientific and Industrial Research contains an account by Sir William McCormick of its activities since its foundation in 1915. According to an abstract in the *Spectator* the program which has been elaborated by the advisory council during these five years classes its functions under four main heads. First comes the encouragement of individual workers at research. The special claims made by the needs of the war practically denuded the universities of research workers. Now that peace has returned other dangers have arisen. On the one hand, the universities are overcrowded with students, and the demands of teaching are leading to an impending shortage of those research workers, without whom no science can advance. On the other hand, the revival of industry is tempting men away from "the corps of research workers" into the service of the great manufacturing corporations. During the past four academical years the Advisory Council has spent about £50,000 in maintenance grants to research workers, and it expects to spend nearly as much in the forthcoming year. "No conditions are attached to the grants made to workers whose sole aim is the extension of knowledge, either as to the line of their work or as to the use to be made of the results," though, of course, great care is taken that the recipients of state aid should be genuine workers at the solution of a knotty problem.

The second part of the program includes the organization of research associations for special industries. A large and wealthy firm has its own laboratories and its own staff of chemists or physicists. But in many industries the firms are too small to do this work for themselves, and in all industries cooperation saves waste and duplication of effort. A fund of a million sterling was authorized by Parliament to assist in the establishment of research associations, of which eighteen are already at work and five others have been approved. The firms connected with the existing associations have undertaken to raise an annual sum of nearly £40,000 for their purposes, and it is probable that this income will be largely exceeded as the benefits derived from research become practically apparent. The industries which already have research associations in existence are those of cotton, linen, wool, leather, bootmaking, laundering, sugar, cocoa and jam, motoring, glass, iron, nonferrous metals, rubber, photography, scientific instruments, Portland cement, refractory materials, and shale oil. It is much to be hoped that the rapid growth of these promising infants will soon convince industry as a whole of the necessity for scientific research as a basis for the profitable union of Capital and Labor.

The third item in the program of the Advisory Council is the conduct and co-ordination of national research; in other words, provision for dealing at the national expense "with certain fundamental problems which were of such wide application that no single industry, however intelligent or highly organized, could hope to grapple with them effectively." The first of these basic problems is that of fuel, to study which the Fuel Research Board was established in 1917. Closely allied is the conservation of coal and mineral resources. The problem of the preservation of food and that of building materials and construction are also being handled by special Boards. The Geological Survey and the National Physical Laboratory have been handed over to the Research Department. The Radio Research Board takes its place beside three new boards, dealing respectively with chemistry, physics and engineering, to coordinate the scientific work still required for the fighting services. The fourth item of the program is the granting of aid to scientific and professional societies for purposes of research.

ENGLISH MEDICAL LABORATORIES

MEDICAL service in England is more elaborately organized under the control of the state than in the United States. There is a Ministry of Health which has appointed a medical consultive council and this council has presented a report which